

Free and Low-Cost GIS Packages

Getting Started with Plat Maps

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At the 2008 Local Government GIS Coordinator Forum, I mentioned that there are a number of free and low-cost options available for counties to get started making plat maps. By request, I have listed below is a collection of links, products and information that may be of help. All are Windows, but there are more available in Linux as well. Many of the products can also be found on the IGIC website "Resources and Links" page.

<http://opensourcegis.org/>

A website that lists a hundred free GIS software packages. Most are not going to be too useful to a novice, but some are.

http://www.ruraltech.org/gis/map_info/toolbox/index.asp

Lists free CAD & GIS packages.

Solutions:

GRASS with the add-on m.cogo should work for practically every need. There is a learning curve, but, well, it is free.

Other GIS viewers include:

ArcReader – free (every county has this from the IDHS **First Response Map** program)

AccuGlobe – free (this is what I use)

MapWindow – free (looks powerful)

Manifold – \$300 may be the best low-cost GIS for analysis (no COGO, but uses VBasic so it could import from COPAN; can georegister scans, so plats could be brought in for heads-up digitizing).

GIS Viewer with Integrated Translation Tools

GlobalMapper - \$299 (very powerful)

COGO

COPAN cogo tool – free (exports to TXT and Geodimeter total station)

CDOT COGO – free (needs AutoCAD)

QuickCOGO – \$80

PCSurvey with COGO – \$250

DeedDrawer – \$400

TraversePC – \$2,000

CAD

BRL-CAD – free (powerful modeling brought to you by the Army)

JustCAD – \$19

TurboCAD - \$100 (I have seen it for \$50, may be the best low cost drafting package)

CADopen – \$500

AutoCAD Lite – \$1,300 (CDOT COGO might work for input – free)